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## THE CURRICULUM AND VOCATIONAL GUIDANCE

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Organized direction and guidance with respect to the vocations of life is of very recent development. It is true that fathers and mothers almost from the beginning of history have endeavored in a crude way to have their sons well started in life. Benjamin Franklin's father went with him to various shops in order that he might see the work and "discover the bent of his inclinations." Fortune-tellers and clairvoyants, phrenologists and physiognomists, were the random answers to a need long felt. This need becomes all the more acute when there are apparent failures in every walk in life, when with plenty of work in the world there are idle men everywhere. It was Frank Parsons who made the first systematic attempts to help people to find the right place in life. His method was to get the subject, in answer to printed questions, to give in writing as complete an account of himself as possible; then by personal conversation help him to understand his limits and possibilities. To some, "vocational guidance" means just such introspection and council; to others it means helping persons to find and locate in the right job; to still others it means giving information about vocations and a try-out in various ones. To aid in all of this, psychologists have worked on tests of mental ability, tests for vocation types, and tests for specific actions. Information about vocations has been printed and compiled and a new subject—vocational guidance—is knocking at the doors of the school curriculum.

The discussion in this paper is limited to the question of what the curriculum has to do with vocational guidance. The term "curriculum" is here taken to mean the material of knowledge and social practice organized into a form suitable for educational purposes. Vocational guidance is the effort to place before the individual such experiences as will change his character and cause

him through his own inner growth to develop a consciousness of his own abilities and place in the work of the world. Vocations are the occupations by which man gains a livelihood.

An aristocracy sets men off into groups such that the individuals of one group do not intermingle freely with those of another. It may be on account of inherited privileges, it may be because of specially acquired privileges, or it may be a social prejudice. It is evident at a glance that knowledge of vocations will not cause class differences of the first kind to arise, but it may be that to know how another lives and works will set up feelings that will prevent association. Thus, to learn of the work of a maker of matches—the place he works in, the disease he is subject to—may set up a barrier between us that will cause me to object to his having some of the rights that I enjoy. On the other hand, such a knowledge operates to arouse sympathy and a desire to alleviate such a condition while warning us of a situation where an individual is hampered and fettered. If vocational insight becomes a part of the curriculum, then it becomes a property common to all, and common knowledge is a means of removing class barriers. To say that young people who do not care for academic study should be placed in vocational schools by themselves is an arbitrary method of using guidance to set up barriers between people by compelling them to live and work in separate social groups. Moreover, an individual is set thereby within definite limits, and already in many towns the finger of scorn is pointed at vocational-school boys. Vocational guidance in every public-school curriculum gives an equal opportunity for every boy and girl to gain some idea of the vocations of men and women. Democracy requires a wide spread of such knowledge.

The more chance one has to learn of different occupations the greater chance he has of being able to develop his own individuality. Misfits are due to a lack of this opportunity for wide knowledge and experience. One man may fail as a bookkeeper and make good as a clerk; one may be a good farmer but a poor lawyer. All such misfits mean loss of time in getting located, failures when right locations are not made, and loss of efficiency all around. Democracy stands for the equal chance of every individual to develop

to the extent of his ability, and if the material and practice of vocational guidance helps to do this it is to that extent democratic in character.

Men are found idle when there is work in the world to do; men shift from one occupation to another; there are strikes, lockouts, and contentions in the work in which men are engaged. All such conditions indicate that a satisfactory relationship between the individual and society has not yet been reached. Such an adjustment requires a long time, and while some progress is made through influencing the adult, the most lasting changes may be produced through education of a younger generation. Misfits are the result of ignorance; therefore if to individuals there can be brought a knowledge of the needs of vocations and a knowledge of their own abilities in relation thereto, some progress may be expected. The vocational counselor and the bureau will do what they can for the grown-ups in trying to remedy a diseased condition, but the curriculum of the public school is the most potent agency looking toward prevention, because the public school, in touching the lives of practically everyone at a plastic stage, is a means of giving such a knowledge a wide distribution.

The material which the curriculum may present is concerned with the nature of occupations, the conditions under which they are carried on, the hours of labor and the remuneration, the chances for employment and the chances for advancement, together with suggestions relative to individual ability. Because these questions must be asked by everyone and because they are problems social life constantly meets, their place in the curriculum is socially justified. Furthermore, society is made better to the degree in which its members are better; hence it becomes vitally concerned in the efficient distribution of its members. When there are more stenographers than positions in a locality, fewer teachers than places to teach, fewer farm hands than can take care of the crops, while there are more carpenters in town than can get jobs, or when a machine hand could do better as a painter or a clerk as a dress-maker, then there is an inefficient distribution of the members of society. An efficient distribution can be obtained only when vocational knowledge and insight are widely distributed. It is

a part of man's social inheritance that he should be engaged in work—a work that will be the means of earning a living. And whatever means will bring an appreciation of the conditions of this inheritance to the greatest number, together with the greatest freedom of association, will be democratic and social.

Social groups depend on “consciousness of kind,” and this is brought about when individuals share one another's activities. If, then, into the curriculum there can be introduced a body of information and practice such that many individuals share in it, it must result in greater social solidarity by extending individual sympathy to wider fields.

Selfishness is easily the root of many evils. It is the motive power in the pushing at the box-office, in the rushes to get on street cars; it puts men of small caliber in positions they cannot handle; it demands a living from the world regardless of service rendered. Such indications show that individuals do not seek the good of the whole social group in a conscious way. Yet a society composed of individuals willing to sacrifice for the good of the whole has the surest guaranty for the individual development of its members. Giving all members of the society an idea of the vocations of men will help them to see the relations of one occupation to another. And as they realize the needs of those occupations and grow to a consciousness of their own abilities and of what society expects, there will be a greater reason for them to help in filling the places of greatest responsibility with the strongest men. To have come into a vocation after deliberate knowledge and choice tends toward satisfaction and permanency and the feeling of doing a share of the world's work. Agitators will have difficulty, therefore, in calling such persons out for strikes, and the wandering contingent of society will become less.

Some may argue that the curriculum is already full to overflowing and there is no time for another thing. This is arguing on the basis that the material in the curriculum has a firm and inalienable right to be there—in fact, that it has a “divine right.” It does not take into account a changing type of society. If individuals develop and society continually reaches on to heights not reached before, then the curriculum must be a developing

thing; the sanction of its being is in the social life. We marvel that the curriculum has been shaped for the 4 per cent or 5 per cent who are to go to college while the balance must shift for themselves. Why give time to Latin, Greek, or algebra if in the end ignorance of childish ailments causes the loss of a little life? What does it profit to know the least common multiple, the binomial theorem, or abstract grammatical rules if in the end the would-be worker is drawn into a position with no outlet or wastes years in wandering from place to place with no definite aim? A curriculum based on social life always has time for socially valuable things. As suggested, the curriculum may make a place for vocational guidance by displacing material whose value relatively is much lower. Why should not the subject-matter of vocational guidance as formulated in such topics as "Things Boys and Girls Have Done That Are Worth While," "Blind-Alley Occupations," "My Natural Ability," "Millinery," or "Farming" be as suggestive and profitable as themes in English such as "A May Morning," "Queen Elizabeth's Character," or "Macbeth's Motives"? Certainly they are more closely connected with the experiences of the boys and girls and open to them phases of the real social life around them. Some practice at the real work of a tinsmith in making a sheet-metal box or soldering a leaky pan will bring the real problems of a vocation close to a boy and he has some basis on which to decide whether he will be a tinsmith or not. Because vocational guidance furnishes real life-problems of high value it has a right to take some of the time of the curriculum.

At first thought one might say that the proper time for vocational guidance to appear is when a person is ready to go to work. But time is short then and one is likely to follow impulses rather than good judgment. At such a time the pull of a job with a high initial wage is very great and especially is it so with pupils who leave school from the elementary- or high-school departments. Children who go through the high school are a highly selected group and those who go to college are even highly selected. Under present conditions the future of even more high-school pupils is somewhat definitely marked out, but as the school gets more and more away from the old, narrow, classical lines the pupils will need more

and more guidance. The great mass of children who leave school in the elementary-school period are the ones most sorely tempted by "blind-alley" jobs, and nothing has been done to furnish them with a resisting background of vocational information. Vocational guidance, then, must be started low down in the grades. Not that we shall say to the little second- or third-grader or to his parents, "You will make a fine mason," or "You will be a banker," but rather, through the suggestive subject-matter of industrial arts, he will come to have an insight into the industrial life of the community and country in which he lives. Wide-awake kindergartners are furnishing the foundations for this in the little plays of "Cobbler," "Farmer," "Miller," etc.; first grades, when they work out "What Mother Does"; second or third grades, when they construct a village street on their sand table and line it with miniature shops and stores; and other grades continue the plan when they take up problems concerned with food, clothing, shelter, utensils, records, tools, and machines. Such material is not beyond the comprehension of elementary-school pupils. Daily they are in contact with the home, the village (or city street), and the six elemental physical needs of man. It needs only the opportunity to place themselves in the place of the workers of the world to appreciate something of what their work means. Elementary-school children cannot go out and work in the carpenter's place, but they can go where he is at work, see him put up joists, put up rafters, set window frames, and lay floors; they may handle his tools and at school build a house for themselves. It is not argued that they will know whether or not they wish to become carpenters, but it is contended that they will have some knowledge of what the carpenter's work is like and some appreciation of what it means to build a house. Even such equipment is better than no equipment when it comes time to make a definite choice.

Investigations show that it is not economic pressure that is chiefly responsible for children leaving school; it is the feeling on the part of the pupils and parents that they are getting nothing that really counts. Live material of social value and interest will save many pupils to the school.

A differentiation of boys' work from girls' work begins with the intermediate period (junior high school), say the seventh, eighth, and ninth grades. The pupils in these grades are coming into the period when individual independence begins to assert itself. They become more closely identified with the working world through efforts of their own to work and earn. It is a period of wanting "to find out." If the great work of woman is to be the *homemaker* of the race, then the girl's work will be directed primarily toward giving her an insight into homemaking occupations. It is necessary, however, to consider the fact that from the time she leaves school until she becomes a homemaker it may be necessary for her to be self-supporting. Possibly she may never become a homemaker in the true sense; therefore the insight into homemaking must be supplemented by insight into suitable occupations for women. A motive for starting on such a line will be furnished when a girl expresses a desire to work in a certain occupation. The girls may visit a place where such an occupation is carried on; they may study the conditions under which the work is done, consider health, hours, pay, chances for advancement; and even secure a chance to work for a time to try it out. An opportunity to "try out" will be all the more valuable if carried out under actual conditions rather than school conditions. For the purposes of insight, however, the school can set up conditions that are very real in many occupations that are open to girls. In the case of printing, bookbinding, jewelry work, office work, and the like, both boys and girls may work with the same equipment.

If girls are to be homemakers, boys are to be the *home providers*, and as such their range of occupations must be far wider than the girls'. The old manual training, with its "hand, eye, and mind" training, does not go far in showing a boy the conditions under which a carpenter works, nor does it let him very far into the nature of the railroad engineer's job. The starting-point is the boy's own curiosity about an occupation. Then, letting him see with his own eyes the nature of the work, having him find out from the library and from people the opportunity it has to offer, and giving him an opportunity to experience some of the operations involved,

should give him a fair basis for determining whether or not he would be happy in that vocation. To furnish such opportunities *after* he has left school and has started work is like applying a remedy to the sick; giving him a consciousness of vocations in his schooldays is providing prevention. Moreover, employers do not want boys in the trades before they are sixteen, so that it would appear that to be a preventive such work must be introduced before the end of the intermediate or junior high-school period.

If the information and experience gained in the intermediate period, supplemented by the earlier industrial insight, lead to a definite choice, it may be in two directions: first, choice of professional types of work; secondly, industrial or trade types of work. In the latter case the boy will at once, in the secondary school, enter on definite courses of vocational training, while in the former case he will enter courses leading to a professional school. In this department his ideas may be still further directed to the various professions, their comparative values, and the opportunities they offer.

Can such material introduced into the curriculum have educational value? If so, it should be useful material in "directing experience to the modification of character that a richer experience may ensue." Man's most fundamental wants and interests are concerned with his efforts to make a living, and therefore a consciousness of vocations is valuable because concerned with this basis of value. This vocational-insight material is not the end sought, it is not satisfying in itself, but it contributes to an end—that of producing new points of view for boys and girls so that the lives they live will be as rich and full as their abilities will permit. In this sense, as with all other educational values, this material is of the secondary type. The value of vocational-guidance material expresses itself in increasing the interest of boys and girls in the work of the world by giving them, by means of the "exposure" to which they are subjected, a greater appreciation. To be with workers, to see them at their work, to try their work shoulder to shoulder with them, or to do work like theirs, creates a bond of sympathy. Again, it creates interest in the social group, for all types of workers are becoming more and more dependent on one

another because specialization means increasing dependence on one another.

Again, vocational-guidance material has a value in enriching experience because it contributes to a better citizenship. The man who is sure his vocation is a good one, sure he likes his work, and is proud of it, is a better citizen than he who wishes he had somebody else's job. The latter man scarcely pulls his own weight in society and frequently he is one whom society must help. The first man not only pulls his own weight, but, because of his confidence, his joy in life, and his optimism, he is a contributor to the social life of which he is a part.

It must be already apparent that we are discussing a scheme whereby vocational guidance is brought about through material presented as a part of the curriculum. But such material is not a thing far separated and apart from the other work of the curriculum. Because vocational guidance is based on some of the real wants of man it becomes a motive for making live-problems. The working out of such problems involves research, reading, writing, calculation, composition, and spelling; it is joined with the development of our social life, and even literature has a fund of material that is closely connected with the life of industry. In the elementary school the vocational-guidance material is a natural part of the problems worked out in connection with industrial life. When fourth-grade pupils look into the matter of the meat-packing industry, they become interested in the kind of work done and they find out about the conditions of the work. Such contact with industry furnishes a gradually growing consciousness of vocational life. In the elementary school this material is secondary in its purpose, but in the intermediate and secondary schools it becomes the direct motivation of many of the problems taken up.

The discussion implies that the vocational-guidance material is not a separate course, not a separate study, and is not even given special time of its own in the day's program, but it is a part of the work in industrial arts. In this way it is closely connected with vitally related material. Every time new matter is framed up and made a distinct study or course by itself it becomes organized along hard-and-fast logical lines, and fences are erected between

it and other material—it destroys unity but makes for uniformity, it becomes perfect from the organizer's point of view but dead and without flexible points of contact from the pupil's point of view.

It has been suggested that a part of the appreciation of a vocation is to be obtained through some practice in that vocation. There is no doubt that the doing of some phase of an occupation will give one a clearer idea of what it means, but how far that idea is valid in helping one to accept or reject an occupation is not known. To do a thing a few times may, because of its novelty, only make one want to do it more, while if carried to a "practice limit" it will have the opposite effect. Without experimental verification it would appear as if enough practice should be obtained to do away with the novelty of the situation.

Teachers now complain of overwork. How, then, can they in justice be asked to take up a new thing? My answer is that teachers should stand ready to take up any material that has a vital relation to the wants and interests of man as manifested in his social life. They might well hesitate if they are asked to put the new material up as one more little jugful of mental pabulum to be doled out by the spoonful at designated times. But when it is tied up with vital life-problems it falls into its natural place and is no longer a burden.

It does not become, then, a problem on the part of the teacher of selecting the individual for a position; it does not mean that he or she tries these different tests or plans on the pupil for the purpose of finding out which one will fit. Rather these wisely chosen situations are put up to the pupils in the natural course of the social life they are living, and because of their own aptitudes and abilities they react in the direction of the vocation that makes the strongest appeal to them. Such may be the basis that leads to the true "vocational call."

Therefore, because of the great demand of our social life that a high standard of efficiency among workers be obtained, because democracy demands equal opportunity for all, because it contributes to the feeling that greatest ability should take the greatest responsibility, and because it has material of real educative value, we believe the curriculum is under obligations to assume the work of

vocational guidance. When it does so, the method of vocational guidance is changed from the old form in which the teacher discovered and directed, to a new form in which the pupil grows into a realization of his ability and of his place and opportunities in the social and industrial world.

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